

# Prison Philosophy

## Warden of Sing Sing to Tell

### How Jails from Producing

#### Prisoners to Respect Honesty

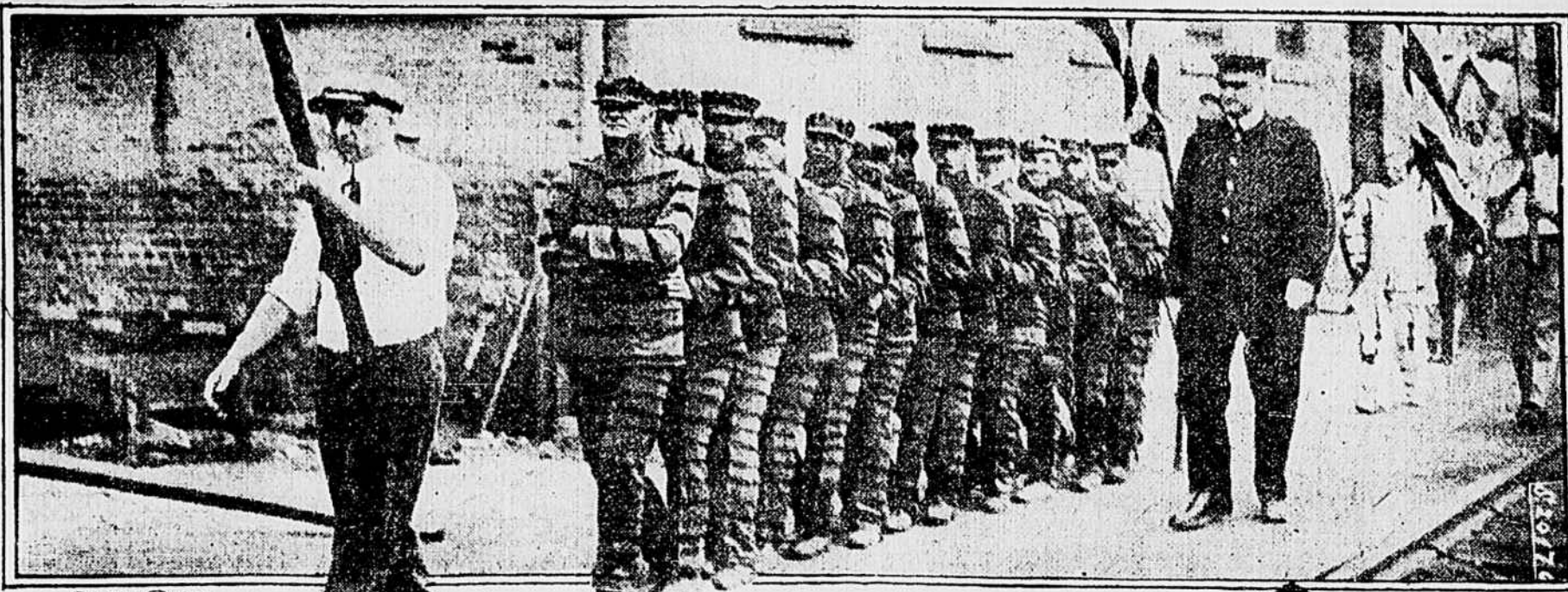
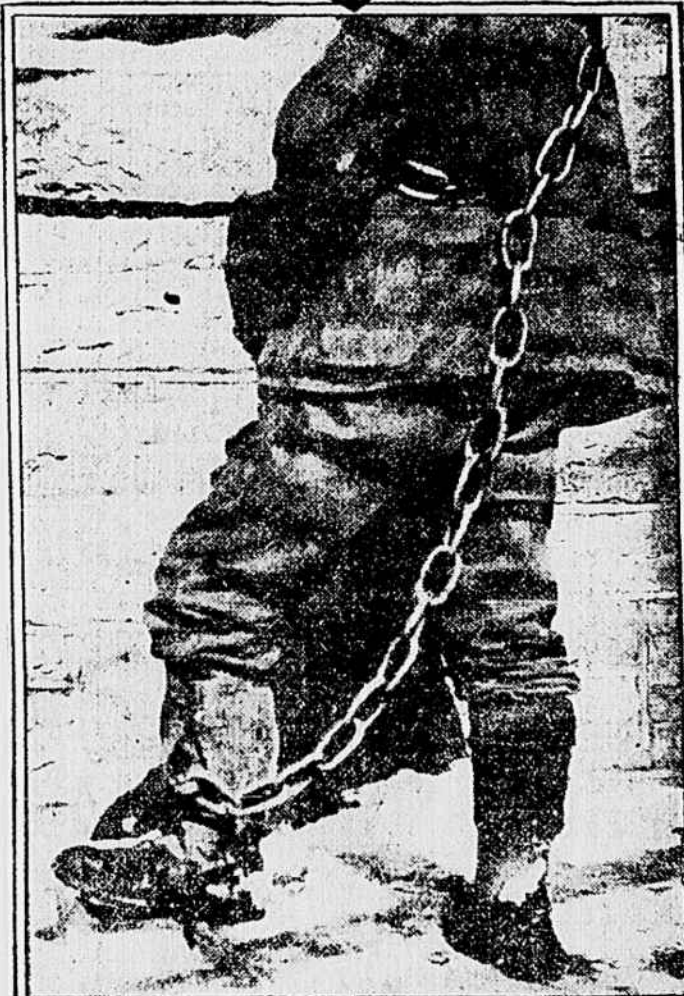


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A Frequent Sing Sing Yard Scene Before Warden Osborne Took Charge

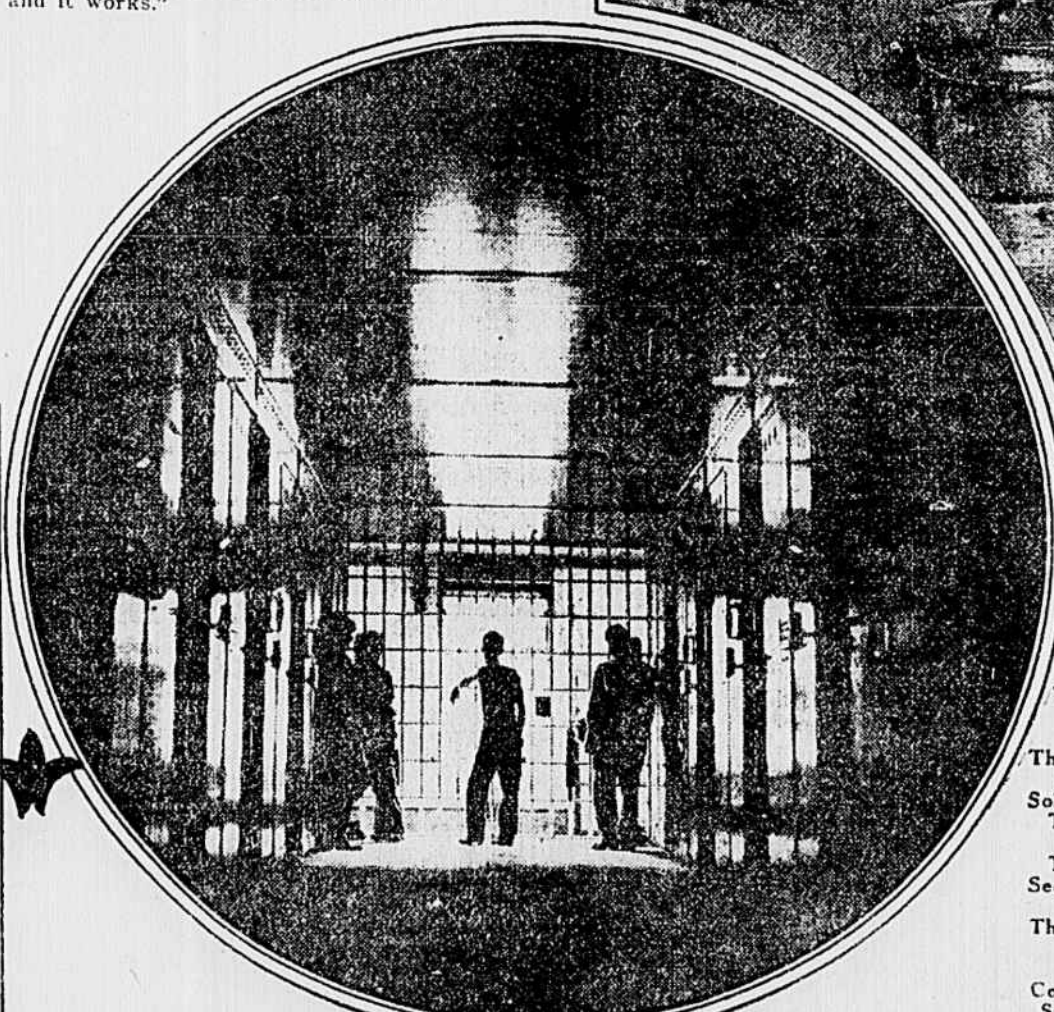
Prisoners Out for Exercise and Doing the Inhuman Lock-Step That Through Years of Practice Fastened a Betraying Habit of Gait Upon Them. This Group Formed Part of the Welcoming Parade That Greeted the Warden. It Shows the Difference Between the Old System and the New.



The Neck and Leg Chain That Was in Use in Onondaga Prison. These Heavy Chains Were Worn Day and Night by Prisoners Who Had Attempted to Escape.



A Typical Old-Fashioned Prison Cell—A Stone Grave in a Reeking Wall.



The Only Picture Ever Taken of a "Cooler." These Are the Underground Cells for Solitary Confinement. The Vault Is Lined With Steel. The Dungeons Are Seen Opening Up on Either Side. There Is No Furniture at All in These Places and the Convicts Sleep on the Steel-Riveted Floors.

prisoners in the institution—except those in the condemned cells. This membership is forfeited for bad conduct, according to the decision of the courts established by the league. The objects of the league are to promote in every way the true interests and welfare of the men confined in the prison. The motto is concise and explicit: "Do good—Make good." The colors are green and white, emblematic of Hope and Truth. The governing body of the league is a board of delegates elected every six months. The delegates select an executive board from among their number, to which is intrusted the administration of the league. The executive board appoints a clerk and a sergeant-at-arms, who is empowered to add as many assistant sergeants-at-arms as necessary, the delegates acting in that capacity. The duties of the sergeant-at-arms are exactly what their name signifies—they are the officers appointed to see that the men understand the rules; they are responsible for the reporting of any infraction of the rules established by the men themselves. But men who believe themselves unjustly treated may take their complaints directly to the League Court, composed of members of the delegates, who hear and determine all complaints, disputes and infractions of the local laws.

#### How the Work of Reform and Human Reclamation Proceeds

"In Sing Sing there are two courts, the Welfare Court and the Warden's Court. The cases range from petty infractions to cases of assault. The Welfare Court usually punishes by depriving a man of membership from a day to much longer. The court refers more serious cases to the Warden's Court.

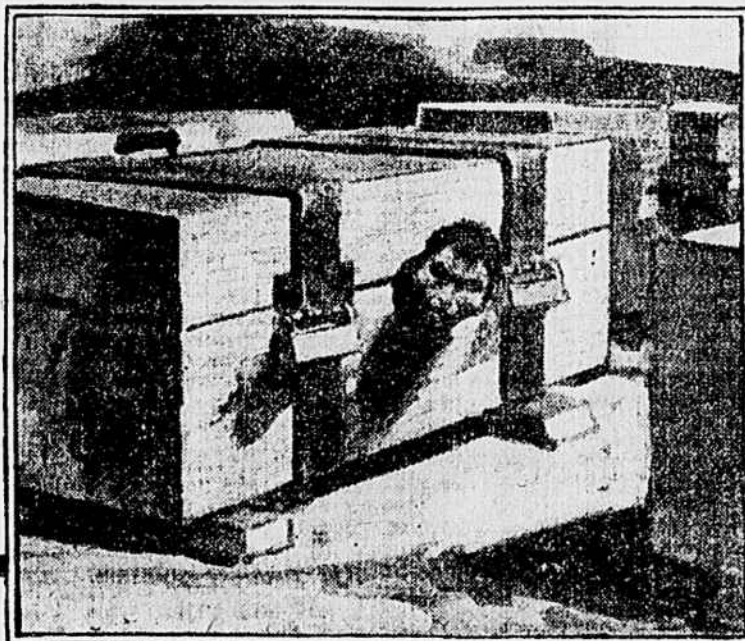
"The men rise at seven and march to breakfast, after the buckets are emptied. Their breakfast is at tables on which they find their knives, forks, spoons, cups and plates. They are served by men who are selected for waiters. After they have finished eating (conversation is permitted at all times) they have usually a half hour for smoking and light recreation. At eight they go to the various factories and mills. At twelve they are through and have dinner. Owing to the large number of men and the small size of the mess hall at Sing Sing, the men dine in groups. After dinner there is time for a little rest and recreation, and they go back to work at one. Work lasts from one to four. From four to six the men have time for recreation—ball playing or a swim in the swimming pool, which is also equipped with showers. At six the men go in to supper. After supper they go to their cells, fetching their buckets and making preparation for their various vocational and other classes, which last from half-past six to about eight. All entertainments, meetings of the league, conferences, and so forth, take place between eight and ten. At ten the men return to their cells. At half-past ten "lights out." In special instances, for study and so forth, men are permitted to burn their lights a little later. During only one period of the day are the men supposed to preserve silence, and that is on the march from supper to the cells.

"There are no guards in the mess hall to-day, where three years ago there were sixty or seventy. There is no stealing from the mess hall of utensils which are now left on the table instead of being deposited under the watchful eye of a guard in boxes. "Under the Mutual Welfare League the tendency is for each individual to be rated as he deserves, and to get the peculiar medicine he happens to need. Of course, in practical workings, there are failures and maladjustments. We do not get perfect government nor perfect relations between the individuals in jail any more than it obtains outside prison walls. Yet, in spite of all, it works.

"One's natural prejudices would lead one to form a theory that of all men the convicted criminals of a State prison are uplifted for even the smallest amount of self-government. Yet the facts are otherwise, for we have given to large bodies of them a considerable measure of self-government and the thing works.

"In the matter of physical health no doctor's reports

Chinese Equivalent of the "Cooler"—Boxes in Which Condemned Political Prisoners Are Fastened Until They Die.



Warden Osborne Wearing a Cruel Old Head-Cap, Which Up to Only a Few Years Ago Was Used in Every Prison in New York State. Convicts Were Compelled to Wear These Day and Night, Rendering Sleep Impossible and Usually Driving the Wearer Insane.

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buckets, cell-block, religious services! The system makes it to talk and act watched to see that stupid though they the keeper produce responsible for the on walls. The evils of the none greater than favored fellows. And you cannot act in yourself. revelation of prison community forces the by some special form of ingenuity of man new cruelty devised a prison system—all denial of initiative act of a man either

The remedy is at hand. The older systems have failed. There are approximately 5,000 men serving sentences in State prisons in New York to-day. Of these, 3,000 are serving second, third and even fourth terms. Obviously, if sixty per cent of our prisoners are not bettered by jail, something is wrong with the jail.

"The old systems failed because the problem of crime is primarily neither a mental nor a physical problem, but a moral one. No man can be reformed except his conscience be quickened; unless there be established, either consciously or unconsciously, natural and healthy relations between the criminal and society, between the sinner and God. The successful prison system must approach the problem from the spiritual side; aiming to solve it by making men FEEL right.

"The Mutual Welfare League—the prisoners' own organization—having its origin in the suggestion of a convict and formulated and put in practice by the inmates of Auburn prison in the Winter of 1913-14, is simply a piece of social machinery, its peculiar form determined by local conditions, intended to produce a certain result; and that result is the sending of men at the end of their terms back into society in a spirit not of revengeful destruction, but of sympathetic co-operation.

"The Mutual Welfare League is composed of all the